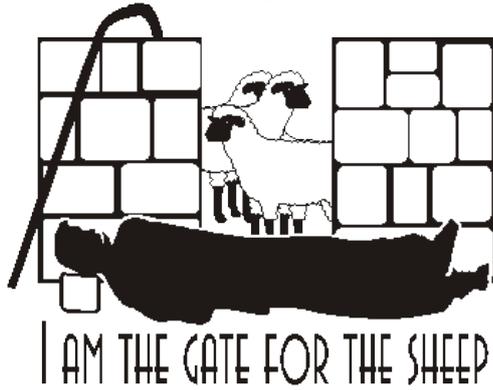


PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's
Warrington*



Celebrating Sunday at Home

4th Sunday of Easter (A)
3 May 2020

Preparation

It can be helpful to prepare a little space as a focus for your prayer. Perhaps light a candle or tea light and place it next to a crucifix or icon. You might like to include some flowers as well.

Easter Song

Why not choose an Easter Hymn or Song from YouTube or a CD to begin your time of prayer.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

R. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Psalms 22(23)

- The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.**
- He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.**
- You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.**
- Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.**

Gospel Acclamation

'Alleluia' is our Easter song. Perhaps sing the Alleluia together using a version you all know.

Gospel

(John 10: 1-10)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them. So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly,
I am the gate of the sheepfold.
All others who have come
are thieves and brigands;
but the sheep took no notice of them.
I am the gate.
Anyone who enters through me will be safe:
he will go freely in and out
and be sure of finding pasture.
The thief comes
only to steal and kill and destroy.
I have come
so that they may have life and have it to the full.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

In today's Gospel, Jesus describes himself as "the gate of the sheepfold". The following story might help to understand the imagery he is using.

In 1960, a man called Eric Bishop told of a conversation he had while travelling in Eastern Iran. He wrote: "Many years ago I was travelling by donkey from Nishapur in eastern Iran to the village of Sabsevar. In the afternoon I set out to see the sights about the village. Not far away I came to a mound of earth piled up in a large circle, like a crude rampart, and on the top of the mound all around the circle was a heap of dry thorns. As I stood wondering what this might be, one of the villagers approached me. "Salaam", I said, "please tell me what this enclosure is for." "Oh, that is for the sheep", he replied. "They are brought in here for the night for safety." "Good", I said, "but why have dry thorns been piled on top of the wall?" "That", he replied, "is a protection against wolves. If a wolf tries to break in and attack the sheep, he will knock against the thorns, and they will make a noise, and the shepherd will wake up, and drive off the wolf." "That's fine", I said, "but why does the wolf try to climb over the wall? Here is the entrance to the enclosure; it is open. There is no door to keep out the wolf; he could

easily enter here." "Oh no", said my guide, "you do not understand. That is where the shepherd sleeps, the shepherd is the door..."

Bidding Prayers

There are some Bidding Prayers on the Parish Website for today, or you may like to make your own prayers as an individual or group.

The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Prayer

Today is World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Perhaps conclude with this prayer:

**Loving Father,
you call us by name.
As we journey through life,
help us to be confident in our own unique identity
and to find opportunities to
develop our own gifts and passions.**

**We pray that the Holy Spirit
will pour on us wisdom and guidance
to help us realise and follow our dreams,
discerning your plan for our lives.**

**Bless your Church
by raising up dedicated and generous people
from our families and friends
who will serve as Priests, Deacons,
Sisters and Brothers.**

**May we support one another
in response to God's call.**

**We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Blessing

May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.



Acknowledgements

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